

Pow Wow Celebration

The ceremony known as the Pow-Wow is a very important part of the Native American religion. Sacred items are placed on display for everyone to see and the spirits to use. Sometimes the Spirits come down to earth and dance with us. When this occurs, only a select few people can actually see the Spirits and it is acknowledged with the blowing of the Eagle Whistle. There are no pictures of these items because they cannot be photographed in respect of the Spirits. This announces that the Spirits have come to dance and listen to the beating of the drum and the singing of the songs. The drum group that is singing keeps singing or another drum group is called upon. A great reveille now begins and everyone must come out to dance or to just be in the circle.

Today there are two different Pow-Wows that Natives participate in. The first is called a Competition Pow-Wow. This involves competing with other dancers in your category and age. Drum groups also compete against other drum groups. The winning dancer is named a Champion Dancer and the winning drum group is named Championship Drum. Other aspects of the Pow-wow cannot be fully divulged because they are very sacred. The Pow-Wow can be referred to as the learning of all nations. Certain things have been allowed to surface in the hopes of better relations to all human, spiritual and animal kind.

In preparation for a traditional Pow-Wow, a certain date is announced in advance. The preparations include such activities as: readying the feasts that go along with most Pow-Wows; obtaining gifts for the Elders, singers, dancers and for the guests; and construction of a few minor platforms. One special platform that is constructed is the arbor. The arbor is an open walled hut building with a cedar floor and willow thatched roof that houses the host drum. The host drum is specifically invited to sing traditional songs, handed down for centuries, at the Grand Openings and Closings. Another building is built for the Elders. This building is designated just for them, ensuring they have lots of room to stretch out and relax. It is mainly used as a respect tool but it also serves a purpose as it shades the Elders throughout the long hot summer days. Once all the preparations are completed, the Pow-Wow begins with the beating of the drum to sound to everyone that the ceremony is about to begin.

The Pow-Wow is a celebration of all life and recognizes the spiritual significance of our people. The drum represents the heartbeat of mother earth and by acknowledging the grandmother and grandfather spirits, spirits of the four directions, the unborn, and the people who have passed on. There are special songs for the past warriors and soldiers who have sacrificed their lives for our nation.